

WISCONSIN EDUCATOR EFFECTIVENESS SYSTEM • **BALANCED ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK AND SLO PLANS**

How does a balanced assessment framework support the SLO process?

A balanced assessment framework is a set of tools and strategies that a teacher, a school, a district, or a larger outside agency uses to measure student learning. There are many reasons for measurement, distinct scales of measurement, and needs to measure student learning. A balanced assessment framework uses a variety of tools to address diverse aspects of learning to gather the best possible “pictures” of student learning throughout the learning cycle (prior to instruction, as learning is taking place, and after instruction.)

Different kinds of assessments (summative, formative, and benchmark or interim assessments) can provide specific information that ultimately helps an educator to effectively establish and conduct an SLO process. An educator must first decide what he or she wants to measure, and then decide which measurement tool will best provide the needed information. Assessment results can then help an educator set future instructional goals, choose instructional strategies and practices, evaluate the success of his or her choices, and responsively adjust instruction to meet student needs.

Setting the SLO goal to maximize student growth

Using student assessments as part of establishing an SLO goal provides a teacher with insight into a student’s abilities prior to instruction and helps define both what a student needs to learn and how a teacher provides instruction.

The key to student growth is finding the right stretch point—that point that pushes a student past their comfort zone enough to engage them to reach a goal, but not too far away that the goal seems impossible to reach. Assessment data can help teachers find the right stretch point for each student.

Student needs may also require multiple stretch points throughout the learning cycle. Some students begin the learning cycle significantly behind peers or norms in specific skills, and just reaching a student’s stretch point goal once during a cycle or year may not result in the amount of learning the student needs in order to become successful. An educator may set a series of smaller stretch point goals and plans to achieve each step. Educators who can get students to reach a stretch point and re-establish a new stretch point for the student multiple times on the way to achieving an age appropriate goal (or beyond) within one year or cycle of instruction are the most successful at closing the achievement gap.

Educators should focus on setting an SLO goal that appropriately:

- *Identifies an important skill area in which the group of students needs to grow*
- *Challenges a targeted group of students*
- *Establishes an achievable stretch point (or points) for achievement*

During rating years, evaluators play a critical role in guiding the SLO goal-setting process and approving worthy, high-quality goals. Setting and approving a high-quality goal at the beginning of the process is the foundation for evaluating the educator’s efforts at the end of the learning cycle. In non-rating years, peers play a similar role in providing formative feedback and guidance in setting high-quality, achievable SLO goals and helping an educator to self-score the SLO process accurately.

Tracking progress and documenting evidence of practice in evaluating the SLO

SLO scoring depends on the evidence of how an educator's learning and practices have positively impacted instruction, and resulted in increased student outcomes. Educators should continually document and reflect on strategies (for example, journaling) while pursuing the SLO goal.

One way to think about this process is to compare it to the scientific method. Scientists set a hypothesis, and then try different things to see if they can prove or disprove their hypothesis. An SLO goal is simply a hypothesis. An educator is saying "I believe that *this group of students* needs instruction and support in *Skill X*, and through instruction, they should be able to achieve *Outcome Y* by the end of the year." Scientists then attempt different approaches, and document what works and what doesn't in evaluating their hypothesis. Similarly, an educator documents the things that they do to both grow professionally and address their students' identified needs and collects evidence demonstrating which things were successful, such as:

- Lesson plans (full or partial)
- Student feedback and reflections
- Personal observations and reflection, including team meeting notes
- Samples of student work
 - Work in progress or process examples
 - Final products or projects
 - Student responses contained in teacher-created formative or summative assessments
- Peer feedback from other teachers working on similar goals (especially important when setting team SLO goals)
- Peer observation data
- Short videos or movies of the teacher delivering instruction
- Benchmark (interim) or large-scale summative assessment results

Educators have the opportunity to review their goal and the progress toward their goal at the Mid-Year Review conference. At that time, the educator can make adjustments to aspects of their SLO, including elements such as his or her goal, plan, or specific instructional strategies. It is important for an educator to document many different pieces of their work to show how their efforts impacted instruction.

Evaluating the SLO

Through a collaborative conversation, the educator and evaluator decide to what degree has an educator's SLO process been successful. They consider assessment results in concert with instructional choices, practices, and strategies. Discussing the instructional context and environment, including issues affecting instruction that developed during the process the educator could not control, also plays an important role in the evaluation.

Additional Resources

"Using a Balanced Assessment Framework to Support the SLO Process"

A packet that explains the balanced assessment framework and includes many examples of commonly used assessments, along with information about how to utilize assessments during the SLO process to gather data before, during and after the instructional cycle.

<http://ee.dpi.wi.gov/files/ee/pdf/UseAssessmentsSupportSLOProcess.pdf>

Balanced Assessment Framework System Information: http://oea.dpi.wi.gov/oea_balanced

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